

Mr. Jan Hrubín's M. A. thesis – opponent's review

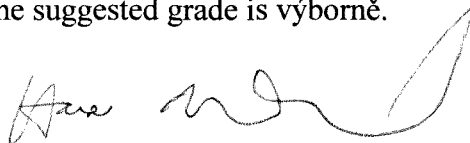
Mr. Hrubín's M. A. thesis deals with the presentation of mass culture in the selected novels of Nathanael West. There is a clear focus throughout the individual chapters as well as a persuasive and developed argument, deep analytical insight supported by precise wording and cleverly organized structure. Moreover, Mr. Hrubín was able to come up with some new connections, and also a few original observations (such as the note concerning Dickinson on p. 77).

However, I believe that the purpose of the opponent's review is to point out the potential weak spots. In my opinion, Mr. Hrubín's introduction sounds a little bit like Summary in Czech: while it partly states the aim of the thesis, it fails to justify the methods and the choice of both primary and secondary literature. Could Mr. Hrubín do that during the oral defense, please? My second reservation is just minor: while Mr. Hrubín provides the reader with a very sophisticated debate on cliché (see pp. 41-43), as to the term grotesque, he chose a definition from wikipedia (p. 27), and did not elaborate much on this issue. Again, I am asking him to do so during the oral defense.

Finally, I find it necessary to point out that Mr. Hrubín's punctuation in the Czech text is not flawless: e. g. on p. 109, line 3 and 9, there are no commas where they should be (, zatímco; , a sám), while on p. 110, line 8 and 14, there should be no commas (případě citově; Například i když). And the very last question is just speculative: Mr. Hrubín's thesis clearly and explicitly sees West as a modernist writer (e. g. on p. 7), but quite a few sources make a claim that he is actually postmodern, way ahead of his own time. What would be Mr. Hrubín's comment here?

Depending on the review written by the supervisor and Mr. Hrubín's performance during the oral defense, the suggested grade is výborně.

Dr. Hana Ulmanová



Prague, Sept. 8, 2010